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THE BALTIMORE EVENING SUN (Field News Service)

SINCE 1978, THE NAMES OF NEARLY 2,000 SECRET CIA AGENCY OPERATIVES OVERSEAS HAVE BEEN EXPOSED BY COVERTACTION INFORMATION BULLETIN.

BUT THE NEW YORK TIMES, IN A SERIES OF STORIES, NAMES OF CURRENT AND FORMER CIA AGENTS TIED - ELIMINATED - OR INDIRECTLY - TO DEALS TO TRAIN AND SELL ARMS TO TERRORISTS IN LIBYA.

THE TWO JOURNALISTIC EXAMPLES ARE CAUGHT UP IN A CURRENT FREEDOM OF THE PRESS DEBATE OVER TWO SENATE PROPOSALS TO OUTLAW PUBLISHED STORIES THAT EXPOSE THE NAMES OF CURRENT AND FORMER COVERT INTELLIGENCE AGENTS.

CONGRESS IS TRYING TO COME UP WITH A LAW THAT BALANCES THE BENEFITS ARISING FROM THE JOURNALISTIC PURSUIT OF ABUSES AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY WITH SUCH BLATANT EFFORTS AS COVERTACTION TO "BLOW THE COVER" OF SECRET AGENTS. COVERTACTION IS A WASHINGTON-BASED PUBLICATION WHICH OPENLY PROFESSES ITS GOAL OF IMPAIRING FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS.

SENATE SOURCES EXPECT THE BILL TO COME TO THE SENATE FLOOR SOMETIME THIS MONTH AFTER SEN. LOWELL WEICKER (R-CONN.) PUT A "HOLD" ON THE BILL TO ALLOW MORE TIME FOR SENATORS TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THE ISSUES.

FORMER CIA AGENTS OPPOSING THE BILL CONTEND THAT AMERICAN AND SOVIET SPIES ALREADY KNOW WHO MOST OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS ARE IN MANY COUNTRIES.

THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, HOWEVER, HAS LINKED ATTACKS ON U.S. AGENTS OVERSEAS TO EXPOSURE OF THEIR NAMES AND ADDRESSES IN SUCH PUBLICATIONS AS COVERTACTION.

RICHARD S. WELCH, CIA STATION CHIEF IN ATHENS, WAS MURDERED IN DECEMBER, 1975, WITHIN A MONTH AFTER HIS IDENTITY WAS DISCLOSED BY COUNTERSPY MAGAZINE, A PUBLICATION PUT OUT BY FORMER CIA AGENT PHILLIP AGEE.

IN JULY, 1980, AFTER COVERTACTION CO-EDITOR LOUIS KOLF IDENTIFIED 15 U.S. EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN JAMAICA AS CIA OPERATIVES, TWO OF THE INDIVIDUALS WERE TARGETS OF APPARENT ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS.

YET IN PURSUIT OF THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW, PRESS REPORTS DURING THE WATERGATE HEARINGS REVEALED FORMER CIA AGENTS CARRYING OUT

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